

April in Fantasy: Polyphonic Memories of the Revolution

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Abstract

In the early 2010s, most Portuguese had to manage to keep their heads above the waters of a serious financial crisis, aggravated by the austerity measures imposed by the Troika in 2011. The Troika representatives left Portugal in 2014 after the bailout agreement had formally finished. There was a new horizon of economic prosperity, with prospects of improvement in the standards of living of the Portuguese. In the meantime, Portugal celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Carnation Revolution. *O verdadeira ator* (2011) and *O Coro dos Defuntos* (2015) are two novels whose narratives use fantasy to represent the persistence of the late years of the New State and the Carnation Revolution as phantasmagoria in the collective memory. These narratives confirm that the legacy of the post-revolutionary discourse (Cardoso Pires and Lúcia Jorge, among others) can shed light on the political, social and cultural tensions experienced in the 2010s, re-defining the Portuguese as the metaphor of the collectively-driven subject to overcome conflict. Ultimately, the memory of the Revolution in the 21st century shows that these are melancholic times, burdened by the lack of utopia, aggravated by the tensions between depoliticized collective memory policies and efforts to ignite hope to reverse melancholia.

Keywords: Revolution, Utopia, Imaginary, Fantasy, Memory

1. Contextualizing

The International Monetary Fund called Great Depression to the period between 2007 and 2012 because it was the most serious global

recession since the 1930s. What started as a financial emergency and a subprime mortgage crisis in the US eventually led to the collapse of the European economy, particularly the southern European economies. After the bailout request in 2011, the Portuguese government implemented measures to improve the State's finances, with devastating social consequences. By the end of 2012, unemployment rates had rocketed up to over 15 per cent, and around 40 per cent of the Portuguese youth were jobless. During this period, approximately 30 per cent of the job contracts were short-term. The young emigrated in droves, and, in 2013, around 20 per cent of the Portuguese were living abroad (Soeiro 2014: 63).

After 2000, digital platforms and the Internet fostered the widespread feeling of participating in a "global imagined community", with impact on social movements as part of the exercise of active citizenship (Soeiro 2014: 56). The experience in Iceland, with its *wikiconstitution*, and that in Tunisia became important references for subsequent social movements because they established that social mobilisation could become successful in attaining change (Soeiro 2014: 58).

In Portugal, the first major street demonstrations against this crisis gathered half a million people in several cities on 12th March 2011, and it was first called on Facebook and a blog. Not only did the Portuguese protest the economic deterioration that had resulted in massive unemployment, but they also expressed their mistrust against Portuguese politicians. The signatories of the call for the demonstration called themselves representatives of the "generation in the lurch", but the streets were full of people of different generations, united in frustration against the crisis.¹

Although it was a non-partisan movement, representatives of left-wing political parties, social organisations, trade unions also marched on the streets.

From the early months of social unrest, the memory of the Carnation Revolution was key to communicating frustration and demanding change; it made sense for millennials, born after 1974, when they developed strategies of protest. One of the songs that encouraged popular outcry over economic difficulties was “*A Luta é Alegria*”, sung by the duet *Homens da Luta*, selected to represent Portugal in the Eurovision Song Contest in 2011.² Even though it barely reached the 18th position in the semi-finals and was eliminated, its popularity showed that the duet empathised with the general feeling of dissatisfaction. On stage, they were accompanied by three backing singers dressed up in 1970s clothing: one as a peasant worker; another as a construction worker; and the third singer as an urban young woman. They all wore red carnations and shouted: “*A luta continua quando o povo sai à rua*” (*The fight goes on when people go to the streets*) at the end of their performance. Red carnations were worn at street demonstrations and the slogan “*Povo unido jamais será vencido*” (*People united will never be defeated*) was shouted as demonstrators marched the streets. “*Grandolar*”, that is singing “*Grândola Vila Morena*” as an act of protest to interrupt public events, also revived the memory of the Revolution whose 40th anniversary was celebrated amidst the crisis in 2014.

The memory of the Carnation Revolution was a shared terrain in the 21st century. Used by those who experienced the revolution and those who were born after 1974, the protests were less rituals of historical remembrance than performances revitalising the initial aspirations preserved in the memory of the Revolution. Various Portuguese scholars agree that 1974 emerged as the Portuguese utopia of the 20th century. Almeida argued that the 25th April was the utopia forged from Marxism that eventually resulted in the establishment of liberal democracy, which was a deviation from people’s initial expectations (Almeida 2017:295-296). Loff

contended that the historical revisionism of memory of the Revolution developed by right-wing policies collided with the left-wing efforts to consolidate the revolutionary memory as the right to discuss the present and build the future (Loff 2015:138). In 2013, José Gil saw in “*grandolar*” the expression of people demanding action from the government to fulfil the promise of democracy for everybody made in 1974. To which extent is the memory of the Revolution important to consolidate the narrative discourse during the 2011-2014 crisis? This article contends that the memory of the Revolution in literature is reinvented through a parodic use of the concept of revolution.

To which extent is the literary legacy of the 1980s appropriated? Lourenço argued that Portuguese literature has always been centred in determining the national identity and history is, thus, important (Lourenço 2000:85). The excess of diagnosis was also pointed out by Santos, a problem that the sociologist attributed to the fact that Portugal is a semi-peripheral country (Santos 2011:399). After 1974, the intellectual debate on the representation of the Portuguese collective identity emerged. Sapega contended that this debate bore a “crisis of identity” and that the work of the writers who published in the early 1980s, such as José Cardoso Pires and Lídia Jorge, revisited the past to explore the difficulties of preserving collective memory (Sapega 1995:31).

Forty years later, Jacinto Lucas Pires’s *O verdadeiro ator* and António Tavares’s *O Coro dos Defuntos* analysed the collective subject at times of crisis.³ Whereas the former’s narrative strategy is developed around the quest for individual and collective identities when certainties crash into self-doubt and apprehension, the latter’s conveys the resilience of a community to endure difficulties before the political and economic upturn. Américo Abril, the protagonist in *O verdadeiro ator*, goes through the problems average middle-class millennials experienced in 2011; in *O Coro dos Defuntos*, the village near Cova da Beira is the synecdoche for the country in 1968: closed, vulnerable and in need of change. In both novels and despite

differences, the muddle, the standstill, and the fear that characterised the final years of the New State are substantiated as a fantasy that is manifest in widespread chaos in present-day society. The revolution is a renewed possibility of self-disclosure when it is grounded on future-oriented memories.

In *O verdadeiro ator*, Américo Abril, a down-on-his-luck actor seeks to find who killed Carla Bruna, his lover and a favoured prostitute of Lisbon's rich and powerful, in troubled Portugal. He has just won the role of a lifetime playing Paul Giamatti in the avant-garde film *Being Paul Giamatti* about the life of a video game character. He is confounded by the role he plays in the film and the roles he plays in real life as a henpecked husband, father, blocked artist and a wanted man and struggles to hold together himself, his family and his country while a political revolution takes place. In *O Coro dos Defuntos*, in the late years of the New State, the community who lives in a small village, in Beira Baixa, believes strange facts can be mystically explained: a missing man is believed to have gone into a rock and a girl to have metamorphosed into a different woman. When the first television set arrives, the villagers have a hard time understanding what happens in the country and abroad.

This article argues that in *O verdadeiro ator* and *O Coro dos Defuntos*, fantasy represents aspects of the past haunting a country where the political and social chaos reflects a society in crisis because the memory of transmitted experience was destroyed. Fantasy has been used to discuss values, rights and duties when reason fails, and arrogance prevails (Monteiro 2003:173). In *O verdadeiro ator*, fantasy deconstructs the norms, in a world where special effects, simulacra and forms of spectacle account for facts and events, which would be articulated differently if the memory of the historical past was reinvented. In addition, present times show that catastrophes have developed into a sort of present-day entertainment with consequences to the relations between culture, society and politics (Medeiros 2015:20). In Pires's narrative, Américo Abril, experiences self-satisfaction when he

witnesses a street demonstration, led by doctors and nurses, inexplicably ending up in bloody rioting because he feels his "coração apaziguado depois de tamanho espetáculo, tanta força, a vida tão perto. A vida dos outros." (Pires 2011:101). In *O Coro dos Defuntos*, the small village during the years of Marcello Caetano's government is used as a parable for the present. Fantasy is used to reinvent mysticism and configure a space where tension grows to the point of outburst. *O Coro dos Defuntos* shows the literary influence of some fiction published during the 1980s when Magical Realism was used to which used to convey indirect political and social criticism. The narrative organisation of *O Coro dos Defuntos* shows a few similarities with that of Lídia Jorge's *O Dia dos Prodígios* (1980).

2. Inquiring Time

Crimes are committed in *O verdadeiro ator* and *O Coro dos Defuntos*. In *O verdadeiro ator*, Carla Bruna is found stabbed in a cheap hotel room. In *O Coro dos Defuntos*, Chichona, the old village prostitute, is found strangled at home. In both novels, the protagonists are considered suspects and chased. In Pires's novel, as a narrative strategy, the detective plot lends substance to an inquiring mind ready to examine facts in detail. In Pires's novel, Américo Abril is determined to find the murderer, at the same time Portugal experiences a dramatic upheaval resulting in a revolution on 29th February.

Using the structure of a detective story to examine the Portuguese society was also the choice of the novelist José Cardoso Pires in the 1980s. After the revolution, fiction was primarily concerned with examining the recent past (Kaufman and Klobucka 1997: 19). Portuguese intellectuals tried to grapple with the issue of the New State. Sapega pointed out that in *Balada da Praia dos Cães* (1982) the detective story structure served the double purpose of examining the "mystery" in Salazar's regime, i.e. the widespread feeling of obsessive fear, at the same time the narrator was determined to find Luís Dantas Castro's murder (Sapega 1990:225). In *O*

verdadeiro ator, it is the memory of the collective experience of fear that shows the muddling state of anxiety and abashment in 2011. The word of mouth that gathers thousands in a silent demonstration in front of Parliament in this novel bears some resemblance to the 12th March demonstration, which took place just four months before the publication of *O verdadeiro ator*. Nevertheless, the “Cерco à Constituinte” on 12th November 1975 is the historical memory of a successful collective demonstration. In Pires’s novel, the demonstration is also successful and leads to the 29th February Revolution.⁴ The police interrogation to Abril and his solitary confinement impart a mismatch between fiction and reality when Abril is reminded that as an actor speaking to a camera in the police quarters should be easy: “Um ator tem de estar preparado para representar para a câmara, não é verdade?” (Pires 2011: 169). In the novel, the police are symptomatic of the pandemonium and the constrained freedom of speech that the 29th February resulted in:

o problema é que esta mudança toda, a ‘revolução’ e tal e tal...esta alteração toda abanou o barco de tal modo que a nossa situação cá dentro ficou muito instável, não sei se me percebe. Os nossos postos de trabalho estão todos os dias em risco. Todo o santo dia. Vimos acontecer com colegas nossos. Uma palavra errada, uma piada qualquer que alguém interpreta no mau sentido, e andor. (Pires 2011:171)

During the years of the crisis, that is towards the end of the 2000s, Portuguese writers engaged in the process of critical revaluation of the historical past (Medeiros 2012: 222). Medeiros analysed Portugal’s post-imperial condition, and when he examined Lídia Jorge’s *A Noite das Mulheres Cantoras* (2011), he established as follows:

O Portugal aqui descrito revela-se em geral tão incapaz de reconhecer e assumir a sua multiplicidade real, como a sua juventude se encontra mesmerizada pelas promessas vácuas de fama e poder oferecidas pela sociedade do espetáculo, como Guy Débord já em 1967 a tinha diagnosticado. Mais ainda do que uma sociedade em crise, o romance expõe talvez a dissolução final das utopias de 1974. (Medeiros 2012: 224)

This bafflement is also present in *O verdadeiro ator* when the protagonist does not recognise his country as it shows to him:

Américo não percebe o que se passa mas, de repente, é como se estivesse num outro país, num lugar que não reconhece, numa rua a preto e branco [...] (Pires 2011: 24)

Abril’s incapacity to recognise his own country conveys the difference between past and present and what ill-defined strategies and lack of hope led to. As in Jorge’s novel, the mobilising capacity of the collective is overwhelming in *O verdadeiro ator*, but escapes the control of the laws of the market and statistics and any traditional model of political partisanship:

Um corpo imenso que parece ter chegado do nada para encher São Bento, e que agora transborda destas ruas e se vai estendendo para cima, para a Estrela, para baixo, para o Poço dos Negros. Lugares verídicos tomados por gente inimaginável, gente mais-verdadeira feitas das inconsistências próprias da realidade. Gente viva que não vem nas estatísticas, que não responde às sondagens, que não cabe nos estudos de mercado. (Pires 2011:128)

This revolution is not too different from the mass uprisings in Iceland, Greece or the *Occupy* movement in the US. Like those rebellions, Pires’s novel shows that this revolution is burdened with “an overwhelming heaviness paralysing the utopic imagination”, to use Enzo Traverso’s description (Traverso 2017: 4). Traverso contended that despite the new revolutions being massively supported, they resulted into deadlocks because of their strategic disorientation; in this novel, the 29th February produces little more than a simulacrum of reality, enhanced by media, similar to that Jean Baudrillard described in 1981:

Na televisão, Américo olha o público. Na bancada do estúdio, mulheres e homens, juventude e meia-idade, classe média e média-baixa, roupas domingueiras como se a ocasião fosse de festa mas uma festa diurna que não metesse igreja. Tornou-se isto a revolução, gente sentadinha que aplaude quando lhe dizem para aplaudir, que ri quando lhe mostram a tabuleta a dizer ‘risos’? (Pires 2011: 184)

People are objectified: the murdered victim is called the “body” or the “object”; and “personality” is the highest-ranking person who ordered the confiscation of Carla Bruna’s little book with the lists of her important clients. Unidentified references cast a shadow whether the actual power is political or financial; the fact that the victim is a high-end prostitute strengthens the case for the financial dominance over politics; *Flor da Vida* is the bestselling novel, widely praised shallowly. Abril’s release from prison is celebrated hysterically on a TV chat show. Boosting audience share is what matters even if he is unable to explain his ordeal. Similarly, Abril telling his wife, Joana, that he found out she murdered Carla Bruna is irrelevant for the course of events, their marriage included. It is about accepting that this is the way the world is organised and the ‘happy ending’ written at the end of the novel is only a superficial, albeit functional closure of the narrative.

The deterioration of memory inevitably results in the end of the dreams generated in 1974: Abril’s demented father is in nursing home care and does not recognise his own son. The older generation decays with “um medo excessivo, o olhar vidrado” (Pires 2011:41). His group of millennial friends had dreamed of building “uma utopia real e diária de amor livre” (Pires 2011:31) but live boring married life routines; and the moment of self-revelation is misunderstood from the outside as a manifestation of the divine because he was kneeling at the time he was told he had been released from prison. Abril reminds the name of a past revolution; it is never an actual promise. In 1978, Eduardo Lourenço wrote that “chegou o tempo de *existirmos e nos vermos tais como somos*” but in 2011, this is irrelevant (Lourenço 2000:116). *O verdadeiro ator* is a melancholic novel because no alternative model of a balanced society is shown to the missed opportunity in 1974.

In *O Coro dos Defuntos*, the murder of Chichona loses importance as the inhabitants of the village are more connected to what happens outside the village through television. When Maria da Glória, wife of farm digger Albano, one of the prostitute’s clients, admits to strangling her nobody pays

attention to her trial: “Ninguém quis saber do seu julgamento e o advogado que a defendia não conseguiu recolher testemunhas abonatórias para depor” (Tavares 2015: 193). Villagers have difficulty of grasping reality outside their environment: NASA expeditions to the moon, the crumbling condition of the regime and not winning the Eurovision Song Contest to mention a few; but to everything they provide down-to-earth explanations:

O importante não era ir à Lua, mas sair da Terra. Abandonar o berço, a casa, ganhar mundo e universo. Assim se fazem os homens e os povos. Ele sabia desta bonança, pois gostaria de o fazer e não o conseguia. (Tavares 2015: 82-83)

The eldest woman of the village contends that life experience shows that there is nothing new under the sun:

Na vida, a impotência do homem é frustrante como um maringue que perde água. E disse: *Jamais se endireitará o que está torto e o que falta não se pode contar*. A sabedoria traz tristeza e o conhecimento, dor. (Tavares 2015: 23)

This wisdom is gained through aging and the memory of times; thus, an ancient myth tells us that the death of an undertaker is celebrated in joy by the dead he buried.

Tavares’s novel also denotes melancholia because it is obsessed with memorialising the late years of a paralysing regime before the turning point that changed the country. Traverso argued that “a world without utopias inevitably looks back” (Traverso 2017:9). *O Coro dos Defuntos* does not show that hopelessness may be overcome. It shows that it was possible in the past. Most characters improve standards of life against all odds: Rainha escapes conviction for being a black widow and emigrates to the US; Olivita is the only pregnant woman in the semi-abandoned village affected by emigration; and Manuel Rato also emigrates to the US, where he is a gardener. Just like Tritão, the tavern keeper of the village who toasts to world changes, Rato knows that the opportunity is due:

Libertar o homem das influências externas era um ideal que Manuel Rato sentia crescer dentro de si. Fichte aprendera com a Revolução Francesa e o jardineiro percebia,

então, como se tornava necessária uma nova revolta. A do homem perante o mundo. (Tavares 2015: 192)

It suggests that the crisis may be overcome in 2015. However, there is no indication in this novel the extent to which this memory will be reinvented in the future. In fact, towards the end of this novel, the arrival of the soldiers to announce the Revolution is narrated as relaying that the future could be deprived of a wide horizon of expectations: “A velha [...] saiu casa fora dizendo que tinham passado os últimos anos.” (Tavares 2015: 203). In 1980, *O Dia dos Prodígios*, fantasy underpinned vulnerable ways to see reality before the revolution. In 2015, given the fact that *O Coro dos Defuntos* was published at the end of a crisis, entering in dialogue with Jorge’s novel is inevitable for Tavares’s novel and, through this exercise of memory, consider the present-day collective vulnerabilities.

3. Fantasy and Memory

Hutcheon contends that *all* literature could be said to be “escape” literature because authors and readers want to create worlds others than the world that is (Hutcheon 2014:76). *O verdadeiro ator* and *O Coro dos Defuntos* were written during the economic and social chaos in the course of the years 2010-2014 and, in both, fantasy shows that the past is still a phantasm haunting the present. In Tavares’s novel, the present is haunted by implication when no alternative utopia is offered but that of remembering the turning point in 1974. This is not dissimilar from the fantasy used in *Dia dos Prodígios* (1978) and *O Meu Mundo não é deste Reino* (1983), because, as Rodrigues argued, these novels are also about the deception of the missed opportunity to implement utopian ideals:

Uma certa decepção pela Revolução perdida, ou pelo resserenar colectivo, pelo regresso a hábitos e egoísmos do antigamente, pelo apagamento das vontades no microcosmos intelectual (embora as lutas sociais e políticas se mantenham vivas) terá determinado nalguns escritores uma transmigração para terrenos banhados pela magia, terrenos da lenda e dos prodígios, sem fugirem, no

entanto, à realidade. (Rodrigues 1994: 155)

Fantasy discusses reality when it imparts that the opportunity is still missed in 2000s. Whereas in *O verdadeiro ator*, fantasy is merged with surrealism, *O Coro dos Defuntos* is narratively structured as a legend that provides the reader with a comprehensive overview of Marcello Caetano’s ruling years that led to the Carnation Revolution as a political inevitability in the country. It describes the period that preceded the present-day democratic country. Hence, it resembles a folk tale. This description is close to the bucolic order and abundance specific to the biblical Eden, the return to communal innocence:

Diz ela que o mundo era diferente: as árvores frutavam-se de forma espontânea, como se tivesse vida própria, e ninguém as regava e podava. Os muros enchiam-se de musgos, campainhas e pipilros, brotavam cogumelos de todas as espécies em todos os cantos e era possível ler nas rugas e nas entranhas dos troncos o destino dos vivos. (Tavares 2015:11)

The beginning conveys blossoming, associated with the idea of motherhood. It is about re-discovering matriarchal wisdom imparted by a continuum of female heritage, enhanced by the phrase “*Diz ela*”, rhetorically used as an anaphora throughout the novel, and the multiple references to the wisdom of the grandmother as the village midwife, healer and clairvoyance. In addition, in *O Coro dos Defuntos*, the literary genealogy of its narrative is established in the epigraph taken from Aquilino Ribeiro’s *Aldeia*; in the choice of regionalisms used by Ribeiro; and by conveying Ribeiro’s literary clairvoyance: “*Diz ela* que naquela terra da Beira, onde faunos havia tal como o Aquilino os tinha predito [...]” (Tavares 2015:)⁵. The establishment of this literary lineage, in view of Aquilino Ribeiro’s insight into the traditions and memories in “Terras do Demo”, strengthens the case *O Coro dos Defuntos* makes for the Revolution as a historical and cultural inevitability. The innocence of the people contrasts with the political narrow-mindedness.

This narrative structure shares a few similarities with fantasy used in post-

revolutionary novels. In any of these novels, fantasy is not dissociated from old family stories, told by grandmothers. Like in Jorge and Melo, Magical Realism in *O Coro dos Defuntos* merges the children's imaginary with an idea of past. Fantasy is present in the myth that tells that the Rainha, the local rich woman, died and resuscitated three times and widowed even more times; in the belief that Manuel Rato, the former seminarian, expelled for reading Espinosa's *Ética* and *O Livro das Cortesãs*, is a werewolf for wandering alone in the hills at night and later has gone into a rock, after he had left the village; and in the grandmother's dreams of an old man falling from a chair, having a red carnation growing in his brain and red carnations spread on a hospital's floor, as omens of the fall of the New State.

The historical facts that link Portugal to the world (the murder of Martin Luther King, NASA expeditions, Black Panthers challenging police brutality, and the liberation movements in Portuguese colonies) and the village's gradual awakening to the outer limits of its world enhance the potential of the revolution seen as the outburst of tension that inevitably implements change. Following the 40th anniversary celebrations and slowing recovering from the crisis, fantasy in *O Coro dos Defuntos* does not fight left-wing melancholia and mourning for the revolution in the past which did not live up to the utopian aspirations. This novel uses fantasy to cover up anxiety and frustration in 2015.

In *O verdadeiro ator*, fantasy is manifest when Abril's preparation work as Paul Giamatti overlaps with his life up until the point when the border between real life and acting is almost indiscernible: "Still acting, are you?" pergunta Hopston" (Pires 2011: 137). The dialogue between Abril and Giamatti as separate identities is the delirium accepted as part of the narrative about chaotic Portugal:

Só a sua respiração, ou a respiração de Giamatti. E quando se volta para o americano, ele já não está lá desapareceu. [...]. Terá, quê, terá atravessado a parede do fundo como um fantasma de efeitos especiais? (Pires 2011: 183)

Giamatti's appearance in the prison cell is as

plausible as Abril's detention and arrest:

"Quer dizer que me prendem sem... razão, só porque um mandachuva quer fazer desaparecer o caderno dos nomes?" [...] "Como é que é possível?" (Pires 2011: 172)

Amidst widespread bedlam, it is hard to tell the difference between what is real and what is not. When Abril finds himself in a wild party, with women in bikinis, loud music, improvised by Vitória, the owner of the art gallery with an installation that invites visitors to discuss concepts, such as public/private space and disposable/revered works of art, he accepts the surreal as part of his life because life consists of an "installation-in-progress" (instalação-em-processo" in Pires, 2011:121)

"A música a bombar, braços e pernas entrando e saindo da grande nuvem de espuma. Não parece nada um "cenário real" (Pires 2011: 120)

Anarchy shown as part of the natural law of order and the tacit acceptance of behaviour and values disapproved of in an organised environment – ranging from being held without charges, surreal environments to Abril's social media stardom as a former political prisoner who became an alleged illumined person– convey the harsh times in 2011 and of the consequences of the prevalence of the market and consumerism as cornerstones of present-day neoliberal system. The 29th February revolution is a parody of a revolution – to coin the term used by Hutcheon – when it merges the millennials' anxieties with the memory of historical past. In this sense, the parody is subversive because the concept of revolution is associated with that of shallow individuality. It also shows the extent to which the collective past has become a cultural commodity. Fantasy has "transgressive, subversive and revisionary aspects" (Bowers 2013: 97). Nevertheless, these novels show us that it is through the transgression of memories that new revolutions could be reinvented.

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¹ "Geração à Rasca" is a word play based on the expression "Geração Rasca" (*Trashy Generation*) used by Vicente Jorge Silva, in his editorial in Portuguese daily newspaper *Público* in 1994, on the university student demonstrations against tuition fees in front of Parliament when students cried out obscenities and showed their butts in protest.

² *Homens da Luta* were Nuno Duarte aka *Jel*, born in 1974, and his younger brother Vasco Duarte aka *Falâncio*. This was a project inspired in the protest songs of the Ongoing Revolutionary Period (PREC). In 2010, they launched the CD *A Cantiga é uma Arma* (*The Song is a Weapon*). *Homens da Luta* interrupted public events as a way of protest. After the peak of the crisis, this project of political protest eventually died out. The other song that encouraged popular protest was "*Parva que sou*" (*Silly I am*), about the poor life prospects of young precarious workers, sung by the band *Deolinda*.

³ In 2013, *O Verdadeiro Ator* received the Domingos da Silva Teixeira (DST) Distinguished Literature Award for the best book published in Portugal between 2011 and 2013 and was published by the American publisher Dzanc Books. *O Coro dos*

Defuntos was awarded Leya literary prize in 2015.

⁴ During the cultural session *Café com Letras*, at Algés Municipal Library, Jacinto Lucas Pires explained that he had actually written his novel before the bailout request. *O Verdadeiro Ator* was published between two major demonstrations: The 12th March street demonstration and the "Cерco ao Parlamento" (*Siege to Parliament*), on 15th October 2012, when the Minister of Finances handed in the 2013 State Budget to Parliament. This was a major demonstration in front of Parliament which ended up in rioting between the police and demonstrators. In 1975, following the elections for the Constituent Assembly, there was a period of political and social instability later known as "the hot summer of 1975". On 12th November, thousands of construction workers demanded improved working conditions and prevented MPs and Parliament staff from leaving the premises during two days until their first collective labour agreement was settled.

⁵ *Aldeia: Terra, Gente e Bichos* (1946), *A geografia sentimental: história, paisagem, folclore* (1951), *Arcas Encoiradas: estudos, opiniões, fantasias*

(1953) and *O homem da Nave: Serranos, Caçadores e Fauna Diária* (1954) cover a range of topics related to the history, geography, oral traditions and memories of the poor communities living in

“Terras do Demo” (*Lands of the Devil*), in Beira Alta. He found the source of inspiration to write these books in his press articles about these communities.

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